

Belmont Human Rights Commission  
Belmont Town Hall  
March 1, 2007

#### Meeting Minutes

Members present: Lisa Bernt, Janet Cudmore-Boswell, Judie Feins, Laurie Graham, Roz Kabrhel, Trish Lohmar, Cheryl Morrissey, Donna Ruvolo, Connie Williams, Fran Yuan (Chair).

Members absent: Moez Rawji.

Guests and Liaisons present: Kathryn Bonfiglio (Belmont Against Racism), Lt. Peter Hoerr (Belmont Police Dept.), Hildy Dvorak (Council on Aging)

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m.

1. Minutes of February 1, 2007, meeting: approved as amended.
2. Announcements were made of the following events--Multicultural Dinner Celebration to be held on March 11, 2007 at Chenery Middle School; ADL Community Seder on March 22, 2007 in Boston.
3. Proposed change to state non-discrimination law: The Commission discussed Massachusetts Transgender Political Coalition's proposal to amend the state non-discrimination laws to include all people regardless of their gender identity or expression. Discussion included possible support by the BHRC of this initiative and whether more broadly, the BHRC should support proposed changes to law, regardless of the subject matter. Several members asked for more information concerning the issues of transgender persons, more information about the sponsoring group and other sponsors of the measure, and the language of any proposed bill. Fran said she would bring up the issue at the monthly MAHRC meeting to see about the policies of other HRCs and that we could ask Laurie Wolfe who brought this bill to the attention of the HRC to attend our next meeting.
4. Phone line: No calls in February. Janet Cudmore-Boswell will monitor the phone line in March.
5. Fair Housing Event: The Commission discussed steps to prepare for the April 26, 2007 event, "More than Money," at Town Hall Auditorium from 7-9 p.m., including planning the program, tailoring the event for Belmont, possible audience interaction, publicity (including press release, calendar notices), possible refreshments, possibility of televising event, possible support from other organizations, co-sponsors. Commission approved motion to have Belmont Housing Trust and BAR co-sponsor "More Than Money" event. BHRC will invite other human rights commissions to co-sponsor.
6. BHRC reception: We have a donor willing to fund a food reception. Commission discussed possible venues (e.g., Belmont Hill School, Homer building) and appropriateness of using non-town facility and importance of using facilities that are accessible. Reception is planned for library on May 24, 2007, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.
7. The Commission discussed the possibility of doing a photo-story about Belmont families.
8. Fundraising: Local business owner, Roger Gallagher, has donated \$400 for the BHRC June mailing in the light bill. BHRC now has a Gift Fund, contributions to which are tax-deductible. Commission will include statement in June mailing that BHRC is not funded and that it welcomes tax-deductible donations. Janet Cudmore-Boswell noted that there are not many state and federal grant opportunities for HR commissions; she will continue looking for possible

grant money. Commission discussed putting donation envelopes at BHRC events such as reception on May 24. Next step would be to look into printing of envelopes.

9. Report of Subcommittee on bullying and teasing: Donna Ruvolo and Laurie Graham discussed a program developed at Bridgewater State by Elizabeth Englander. Prof. Englander spoke at Chenery last year. The program is state-funded. They will come into a town to consult, train educators to work with parents. The services are free. College students work with high school students, who work with middle school students. Laurie and Donna will gather information regarding what Belmont Public Schools currently offer and whether the Bridgewater State program is something that could help Belmont. Roz Kabrhel will look into whether other towns have used the services of this program.

10. Liaison reports: Lt. Peter Hoerr: New Police Chief will be sworn in on March 9; Police Dept. will offer diversity training to members of dept. Kathryn Bonfiglio: Belmont High School is holding Diversity Week; Board of Selectmen has declared that "Belmont Celebrates Diversity 2007."

11. Meeting format: The Commission discussed meeting format, feedback to Chair, setting priorities, time allocation in meetings.

Meeting adjourned at 8:52 p.m.